TREASURY-POSTAL APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE/Passage

SUBJECT: **Conference report to accompany the Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1996 . . . H.R. 2020. Agreeing to the conference report.**

ACTION: CONFERENCE REPORT AGREED TO, 63-35

SYNOPSIS: The conference report to accompany H.R. 2020, the Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations Bill for fiscal year (FY) 1996, will provide $23.2 billion in new budget authority (BA) for the Department of the Treasury, Postal Service, Executive Office of the President, and various independent agencies. Details are provided below.

Appropriations will include the following:

- Office of Personnel Management, $11.817 billion;
- Internal Revenue Service, $7.348 billion;
- Customs Service, $1.456 billion;
- Secret Service, $531.9 million; and
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, $378 million.

Key provisions include the following:

- the Office of National Drug Control Policy will not be eliminated;
- no funding will be provided for the President's tax compliance initiative;
- the Council of Economic Advisors will not be eliminated;
- the Clinton Administration will not be blocked from implementing the remaining portions of its $20 billion bailout of Mexico using the Exchange Stabilization Fund (ESF), though in using funds from this Act for the ESF in fiscal year 1996: the President will be required to certify that there will be no cost to the taxpayers from the proposed transaction and that repayment of the funds is guaranteed; and congressional approval will be required before using more than $1 billion for more than 6 months in any 1 year for any one country (though the President will be allowed to waive this restriction in certain extreme circumstances, unless Congress rejects such waiver under expedited procedures);

(See other side)

YEAS (63)			NAYS (35)			NOT VOTING (1)	
Republicans (49 or 94%)		Democrats (14 or 30%)	Republicans (3 or 6%)	Democrats (32 or 70%)		Republicans (1)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Helms	Breaux	Brown	Akaka	Kennedy	Lugar-2	
Ashcroft	Hutchison	Byrd	Faircloth	Baucus	Kerry		
Bennett	Inhofe	Daschle	Snowe	Biden	Lautenberg		
Bond	Jeffords	Dodd		Bingaman	Levin		
Burns	Kassebaum	Ford		Boxer	Mikulski		
Campbell	Kempthorne	Graham		Bradley	Moseley-Braun		
Chafee	Kyl	Heflin		Bryan	Moynihan		
Coats	Lott	Inouye		Bumpers	Murray		
Cochran	Mack	Johnston		Conrad	Nunn		
Cohen	McCain	Kerrey		Dorgan	Pell		
Coverdell	McConnell	Kohl		Exon	Pryor		
Craig	Murkowski	Leahy		Feingold	Robb		
D'Amato	Nickles	Lieberman		Feinstein	Rockefeller		
DeWine	Pressler	Reid		Glenn	Sarbanes		
Dole	Roth			Harkin	Simon		
Domenici	Santorum			Hollings	Wellstone		
Frist	Shelby						
Gorton	Simpson						
Gramm	Smith						
Grams	Specter						
Grassley	Stevens						
Gregg	Thomas						
Hatch	Thompson						
Hatfield	Thurmond						
	Warner						

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:
1—Official Buisiness
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:
AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

Compiled and written by the staff of the Republican Policy Committee—Don Nickles, Chairman

- funding will be provided to the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations for termination costs and for it to complete its study of Federal unfunded mandates;
- $13 million will be provided to start a pilot program using private law firms and debt collection agencies in Internal Revenue Service collection activities;
- tobacco vending machines will be banned in Federal buildings to which children have access; and
- funds appropriated by this Act will not be used to pay for abortions, or the administrative expenses in connection with any health plan under the Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB) program which provides any benefits or coverage for abortions, unless: the life of the mother will be endangered if the fetus is carried to term; or the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest (see vote No. 370; see vote Nos. 369 and 371 for related debate);

NOTE: Following the vote, per a prior unanimous consent agreement, the Senate receded from its amendment in disagreement (which was the only amendment in disagreement), clearing the bill for the President. The amendment in disagreement contained language making accounting changes to force organizations that receive grant funds to have them segregated from funds they use to lobby the Federal Government (for related debate, see vote Nos. 325 and 564-565).

Those favoring final passage contended:

The conference report before us will provide total funding of $23.2 billion, half of which will be for mandatory programs. The discretionary spending will be $1.8 billion below the President's request, and will be $340 million below last year's appropriated level. Thus, this bill will make substantial, real cuts in spending in line with the ongoing efforts to balance the budget. Key features include: the Office of Drug Control Policy will continue to receive funding, despite the fact that it has become an utter irrelevancy under President Clinton; the so-called Istook-Simpson-Craig language on stopping non-profit organizations from using public funds to lobby has been removed; the President's initiative to hire 6,000 more Internal Revenue Service (IRS) agents off-budget will not receive any funding; modest increases in funding will be given to Treasury law enforcement agencies; courthouse construction projects will be funded at the Senate-passed level; funds from this bill will not be used to pay for Federal employees' abortions except in cases of rape or incest or unless the life of the mother is in danger; and a pilot program to hire outside collection agencies to collect delinquent taxes will be funded. This last provision will not set up an abusive bounty system, nor will it result in an invasion of taxpayers' privacy rights, as some of our colleagues have claimed. The private collection agencies will not have the taxpayers' records--they will only have a slip of paper telling them how much to collect from whom. Unlike former State bounty systems, which have been banned by Congress, collection agencies will not be hired to go over returns with taxpayers to determine how much is owed--in this case, the debts are not in dispute, they just are not paid. All current collection laws will apply to their activities as well. Therefore, our colleagues' concerns with this new pilot program are unwarranted. We trust most of our colleagues agree, and will join us in voting for this balanced, frugal conference report.

Those opposing passage contended:

This report should be rejected because it will fund a new initiative to hire private tax collectors. For thousands of years this approach has been tried by one government after another, and in every case it has failed miserably. We expect the same results will occur with this effort. Hiring people to try to squeeze the maximum amount of tax revenue out of taxpayers sets up an adversarial relationship between the taxpayers and their government, and leads to hatred of the tax collectors. In this modern age, we expect this problem to be worse because of the amount of personal information on taxpayers to which these tax collectors will have access. We cannot support this initiative, and therefore cannot support this conference report.